

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

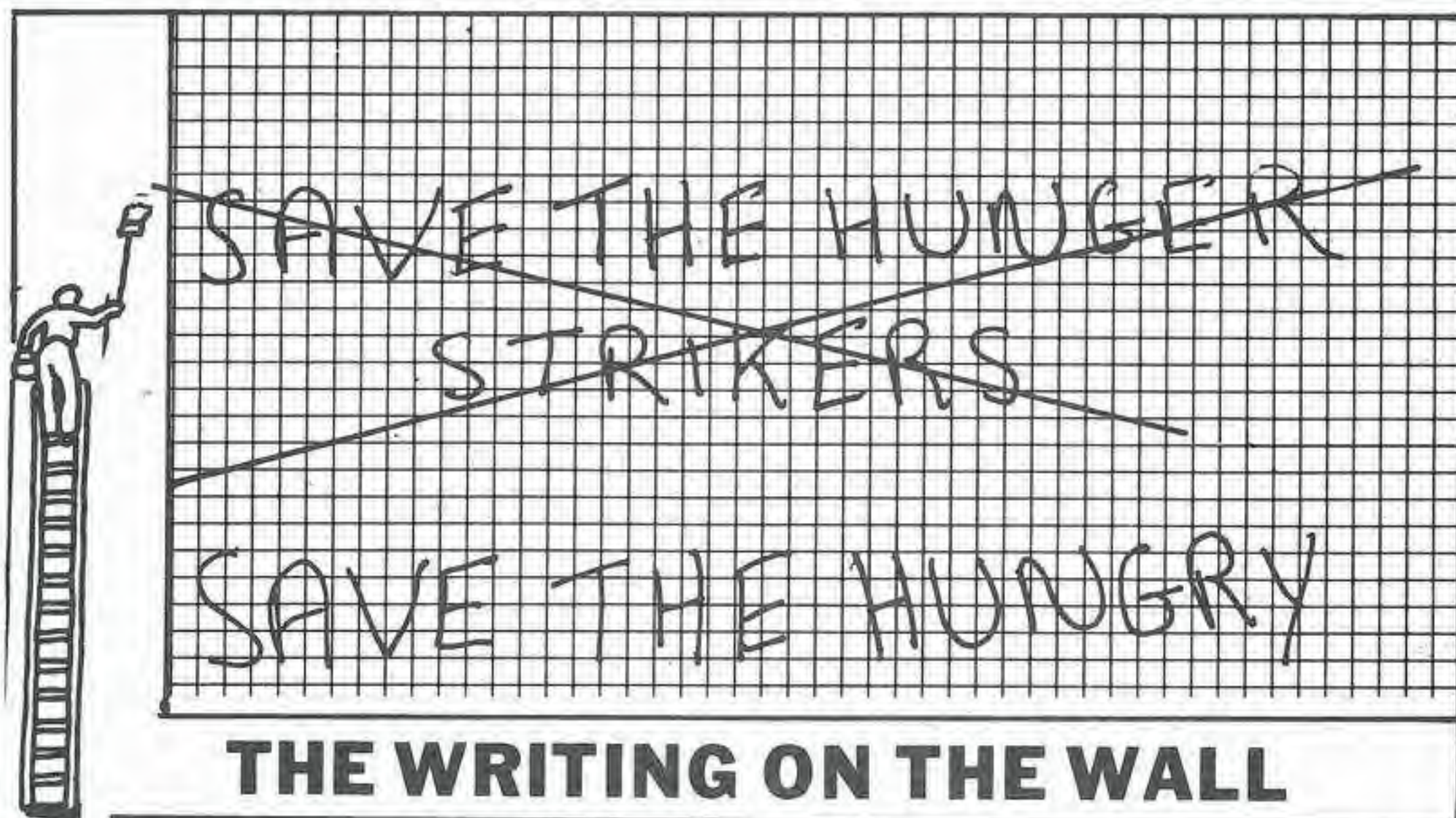
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THE  
VOICE  
OF THE  
WORKER

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic' James Connolly



# The writing on the wall

THE MESSAGE out of an aerosol can on my nearest bus-shelter said, 'Save the hunger-strikers'. The more I thought about it the more I felt it was a nonsense. What could I do?; it was *their* idea not to eat. Not that I believed the propaganda that they intended to fast till death; you don't take salt tablets and water if you have that in mind; they prolong life, not diminish it.

I am reliably told that four to five days without food and water and you're a gone goose. (If any Provo doesn't believe this, he can test it on my behalf; I promise to organise a whip round for the wreath). However, I don't hold with hunger-strikersthough in my own case a couple of weeks without food could do nothing but good. This particular demonstration evoked no general sympathy but there was much public fear that the deaths of even a few of the Provos would mean revenge bombings and murders. There was no sympathy because, as Sister Benvenuta said on RTE, the Provos had demeaned the hunger-strike as a Freedom weapon; theirs was no noble cause.

Nor was there sympathy in the aftermath of the Civil War for the regular hunger-strikes by far-out Republicans. Returning from an all-night party in the late Twenties I encountered a large DMP man laughing his head off outside the Provost's House, Trinity College where a forbear of the aerosol man had painted in whitewash on the wall 'Mary McSwiney Confined In Mountjoy' and a wag had appended "The Birth Of a Nation?"

In the rash of correspondence about the Portlaoise Provos one letter, in the *Irish Times*, caught my eye for depth of thinking, Irish-style. This correspondent got all het up about the legality of jailing the Provos, especially Daithi O'Conaill who, he wrote, had been jailed on the mere *belief*, expressed in Court by a Garda Superintendent, that O'Conaill was a member of the IRA. Well, I ask you! Do you know that I believe O Conaill is a member of the IRA? And more, I believe that O Conaill believes it and would probably reach for his brand of Culture if you persisted in denying him the accolade the Superintendent bestowed. By the way, that sea-lawyer correspondent is a university graduate.

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NO ONE with an aerosol can or old-fashioned whitewash brush has been using bus-shelters or walls to broadcast *tout court*, 'Save The Hungry!' On how many days a week does the man lucky enough to be in work have bacon and egg for breakfast, butter on his bread, meat for his dinner? The answer is damn few; these have become luxuries in a country almost solely devoted to their production. Moreover, office boys and girls are forced to lunch on tea and a bun and our schoolchildren, unlike the children in pagan Britain, have not hot meals at their break (State intervention here, even if the Government were so disposed, would in the words of the late Archbishop John Charles McQuaid inhibit people from practising the virtue of charity!)

As for the army of unemployed and under-employed God alone knows how they live on their dole pittance with the prices of necessities rising every few months to swell the bank balances of the hard-faced farmers of the Fine Gael Fianna Fail cliques. This swathe of our people has not got an income that runs to a once-a-week steak in a country brimming over with beef!

I can readily pass a slogan 'Save the Hunger-Strikers' as an irrelevance; I'm not so sure I'd be unsympathetic

BY DERMOT MCEVOY

or inactive in a 'Save The Hungry!' campaign; that would be much more noble a cause than even the Old IRA that has the benediction of Sister Benvenuta. I suppose, however, it is too much to expect that this forthright nun, no great respecter of bishops, might take the poor people's side against their oppressors, the upholders of the Grocers' Republic? You never know; after all, she's a MacCurtain and, if heredity counts, might well take time off from Cuchulainn and Brian Boru (he faked his genealogy!) to inspire the wretched of the earth, not least of Limerick. As a workers' aide she would *bebienvenue*.

Those who look at The Late Late Show will note that yet again social ills long ago exposed in the *Limerick Socialist* have been given an airing. The subject for a recent debate was what's to happen our school-leavers. Martin O'Donoghue, a Fianna Fail condidate for Dunlaoghaire/Rathdown whose speciality is Economics, spoke at length but said nothing: ditto a Fine Gael T.D. — this may be unfair because he did advocate making farming more prosperous (Are farmers to be allowed a plurality of wives to mop up the more attractive of the girl school-leavers?): Brendan Halligan T.D. suggested massive Government investment in industry — a useful suggestion and, assuming Halligan is returned to the Dail, it will be interesting to see if he will insist that the moneybags/ranchers of Fine Gael pay the sinking fund interest and instalments on the huge loans that would be needed to finance such projects.

No one, of course, touched on the root and continuing cause of our dilemma — the economic system with too few jobs for too many children. No mention, again of course, of Family Planning to relieve the next generation of a problem that is plaguing parents, schools, social agencies, legislators. Yet it is a problem that won't go away; nor will it be solved by the emigrant ship — the projection for Britain in the early 1980s is 3,000,000 unemployed. I thought Brendan Halligan might have grasped the nettle, that was until he announced with a self-righteous smirk. 'D'ye remember, Gay, how we'd meet at the bus stop every morning as we were off to eight o'clock Mass?' A magnificent piece of oneupmanship on O'Donoghue; he is only an economist but, by golly, our Brendan is not only an economist but a Holy Roman economist! Able, no doubt, to extract pennies from heaven! a winning line for the electors of Ballyfermot — or is it Finglas?

There were interruptions in the talk-programme (I suppose with Gay the Plastic Hearty in charge it all comes under the general title of Entertainment). These came from the Sinn Fein, now largely retired from murder, knee-capping, and bank robberies and calling itself "The Workers' Party". A point made by one of them and which Halligan did not (could not?) reply to was why a smelter was not set up to provide 'vast' employment in the handling of zinc ores. Simple that: an expensive smelter provides few jobs, fewer than the investment is worth, and in the absence of a steel industry close by and other ancillary industries to utilise the zinc in plating processes one is forced to export it as ingots. Sinn Fein — The Workers' Party needs to go back to school.

I would have thought that Martin O'Donoghue – he calls himself and likes to be called Professor O'Donoghue – would have fielded that one but I suppose one Shade of Republican doesn't like to expose the idiocy of another Shade. Which leads me to: Why 'Professor' O'Donoghue? Professor is a trade, profession or vocation; a job not a title. I think you'd look twice at me if I stopped you outside the Desmond Bar and asked if you'd seen Mason Kemmy about; yet it is as reasonable as 'Professor' O'Donoghue. Or as silly.

It is the same with 'Doctor'; nowhere outside the Emerald Isle is a man with a Ph.D. called Doctor This or Doctor That. Cecil King, retired head of the multi-million International Printing Corporation, quizzed me about this: I answered straight; 'snobbery', I said. With a twinkle in his eye he told me, "I got an honorary Doctorate in Literature at Cambridge . . .". "By I means, call yourself 'Doctor'; don't be shy about it; no one else is", I said and sure enough he signed a letter to the *Irish Times* a short while later, "(Dr.) Cecil King".

If you're ever mad enough to take a day trip to Newcastlewest, or Newcastle West, here's a safe bet: bet someone £1 that there is not a doctor of medicine

Comment by 18-year-old student after watching R.T.E.'s recent programme advertising the Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave T.D. and his horsey friends: "The cream of the county-rich and thick".

within a mile of that snob town. You'll collect because the local practitioners in medicine are almost certainly only M.Bs (Bachelors of Medicine), not M.Ds (Doctors of medicine). To call the local keep-taking-the-tablets wallah 'Doctor' is a courtesy, which you need not extend, but which nevertheless I recommend as you never know when you might want him to stick a needle in you. No such consideration applies in the cases of David Thornley and Garret FitzGerald; I'll wager that either would have to be well under the influence before he'd allow 'Doctor' Conner to stick a needle in. You should be as wary.

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IF THERE were any titles on offer in the Republic, Ruth Dudley Edwards, author of *Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure* (Gollancz, £7.95), would surely be entitled to a high award: at long last and not a moment too soon she has disposed of the myths about this revolutionary saint of Irish nationhood. She has set the record straight on this arrogant fanatic who aspired not to kill, but to be killed; who regarded hatred of the English as 'a holy passion'; who believed that, though 'we may make mistakes in the beginning and shoot the wrong people', a blood sacrifice is 'a cleansing and sanctifying thing'.

He was especially dangerous, as Yeats said, because he was possessed by 'the vertigo of self-sacrifice'. The pity was that he led James Connolly to his death and thousands more up to the present day: he had not an idea about Ulster (he simply ignored the existence of a million Northern Protestants): he had no social gospel, nothing to commend him to the working man.

Every Irish school, convent and college has fed Pearse the Pure to tens of thousands of boys and girls: the tone was set by Desmond Ryan in his memoir: "Kings with plumes may adorn their hearse but angels meet the soul of Patrick Pearse" (Why Matt Talbot for canonisation in face of this obviously better qualified candidate?).

Ruth Dudley Edwards's book should be compulsory reading; she tears away all the veils even to the cast in Pearse's eye – that's why all his portraits are in profile – and his unconscious (as far as can be established) homosexuality; he adored pure and beautiful boys.

I have fortunately, a built-in resistance to all messiahs especially those who think it a mere mistake to 'shoot the wrong people'; others are not as tough. Is it too much to hope that our educationists will now put the record straight about Mr. Pearse? The mistakes he thought so lightly of are sort of irreversible; only Lazarus recovered from that kind of mistake and he had outside help.

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CARVED ON the tombstone in Hollywood of that great comic W.C. Fields in his last laugh, "On the whole I'd rather be in Philadelphia". Musing about this, I couldn't think of a better general idea for my own stele; it will have to be something to give a wanderer a laugh especially when he is almost certain to have little to laugh about. But where would I rather be? I think perhaps Hampstead Heath where I first heard the story of Voltaire on his death-bed telling the priest who urged him to renounce the Devil and all his works and pomps: "This is no time, Father, to be making new enemies". Meanwhile, the hope must be that I shall survive long enough to continue to do my bit to see Jim Kemmy in Dail Eireann; failing survival, I trust there will be plenty of good workers to take my place.

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BEFORE I say au revoir I must mention that I look forward, as do people I know in Dublin, to further instalments of Sean Bourke's *Daingean Days*. Just think of what 'Bananas' Gleeson sentenced a boy of twelve to endure! Pity Sean did not meet the kind District Justice, the Protestant H.L. ('Harry') Conner, who once relieved for Gleeson who was on holidays. Just once, for Gleeson kicked up such a row at the Department of Justice that Conner was never to relieve him again; his complaint was over Conner's leniency!

Conner, a friend of mine, used to fine people ONE PENNY for no-lights, minor trespasses, wandering cows, 'rauking' apples and all the hundred and one utterly bogus offences that Guards, afraid of their lives of Gleeson, had to clutter up the courts with; scores of cases were 'dismissed on the merits' after Conner asked, 'Had you far to travel?' and being told a couple of miles, would say resignedly, 'Sufficient punishment to have to come to court'. Of course, Harry Conner was a gentleman, son of a County Cork 'fishery' Judge.

The only time I saw Conner lose his temper, well a slight ruffling of temper, was in Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo God Help Us. A woman, wife of a journeyman plumber, had pursued her husband for what she claimed were arrears of maintenance; the case appeared with monotonous regularity at every Court in South Mayo. At last she felt she had her husband cornered. Guards with heads bowed in shame listened to descriptions of her sex life, and lack of it. Finally, Conner said: "Stop! Mrs. F. I can do two things in this case; I can either let your husband off or I can send him to jail. Just say which alternative you wish me to order".

It was the crunch for the voluble Mrs. F. She hummed, she hawed and, finally, said, "I want your Honour to make my husband live with me". Conner seized the Charge Book and, slamming it shut, declared, "And that, madam, is a punishment not recognised by law. Case dismissed". A little gem that made headlines in every newspaper in the world. The Ballyhaunis Sergeant was happy to help us celebrate the *coup de theatre*. But then everyone loved Harry Conner; that's a sight more than you could say about 'Bananas' Gleeson. Indeed, if I thought Harry Conner would be around, perhaps my tombstone inscription should after all read, 'On the whole, I'd rather be in Ballyhaunis.'

# WHEN ADAM DELVED AND EVE SPAN

by JOHN CASEY

Mrs. Maureen Ahern is one of a small indefatigable band of letter writers to "The Irish Times". Most of these writers have well known lines: defenders of our ancient faith from scientific progress in the twentieth century, Provos slaving for Protestant blood, ultra-leftists ready to usher in revolutions with outmoded, ridiculous slogans, and then there is the rightists. The rightists are Mrs. Ahern's group: they are worth reading, mostly articulate, intelligent educated people defending the status quo from any real or imaginary erosion. They also have their nut fringe, people like Constantine Fitzgibbon, a former member of British military intelligence and a C.I.A. agent. Fitzgibbon carried on a one-man campaign against the establishment of the Soviet Embassy on the grounds that it would be a nest of K.G.B. agents. As a supporter of free enterprise it is difficult to see why he should object to competition.

Free enterprise, appropriately enough, was the title of Mrs. Ahern's recent letter and the thrust of the letter was against the growth and power of the unions. There was nothing very original; Mrs. Ahern is not very original, nor indeed are most conservatives. I suppose if they had any originality or any kind of open minds they would question the bedrock of their conservatism. No, Mrs. Ahern is a middle class, small town, housewife articulating the confused views of the middle class, small town housewife. They cannot understand the changes taking place: the changing values and the attacks on the old order. Communism is advancing across Asia, is established in Africa, has a base in the Carribean and is a powerful force on the European mainland. The young are questioning the old system of hierarchical stations, paternalism, the privileges of the wealthy and established religious beliefs.

Mrs. Ahern and her fellow-travellers were brought up to believe that communism was the devil's creed, that socialism was the same thing, that trade unions were for the lower orders, and that the purpose of a trade union was to negotiate an honest wage (from the employer's viewpoint) and maintain a friendly relationship with God and their betters.

In the intervening years things have changed, the great gospel of socialism with its powerful manifesto, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", has spread throughout the globe; the basic tenets of socialistic creed have taken root and people who would not even regard themselves as socialists voice and support the basic principles. The worker will not tip his cap, refuses to be gulled by the flattery and false promises of the employer, has withdrawn his support from the inheritors of wealth and power, questions the promises from the pulpit of happiness on the other side and has become daily more suspicious of the claptrap of capitalist politicians. It is important to note that this does not begin necessarily with the blue collar worker, often, it is the white collar worker schooled in a university discipline, highlighting the inequities and the absurdities of society, who leads the fight and points the way to the future. In Uruquay the Tupamaros draw support from bank officials, teachers, students and university academics. When you see the bank clerks abandoning Dr. Newman, Mrs. Ahern and Ted Russell and all their works and pomps and marching down O'Connell Street, behind the Independent Socialist candidate Jim Kemmy, on that day you'll know that the "Limerick Socialist" has succeeded in its educational objectives! Sounds amusing but the day will come. At present the middle class housewives of Castletroy are slightly uneasy about fissures appearing in the rockery, on the floor of the golf club and, under the carpets in the executives' offices. Small little cracks, not noticed at all by some. In the middle you have an enormous mass of the discontented, ranging from street cleaners to teachers, confused by the capitalist recession, burdened by income tax, rocketing prices, job insecurity, their living standards eroded. Their present feeling is to vote out the National Coalition; their problem is they don't know what to put in its place; they remember sixteen years of

Fianna Fail and know in their hearts that returning Fianna Fail will solve nothing. They don't know what way to go — factory workers, teachers, policemen, office clerks unhappy, unsure, afraid. Most of them are not socialists; they have not examined the philosophy, the doctrines of the movement; they have been fed the propaganda on the glories of free enterprise and democracy. What democracy? The democratic right to vote for one of the social democratic parties every four years, the right to maintain in power the 5% holding, 75% of the personal wealth, the right to nail down the country for the N.A.T.O. alliance, the right to allow the multi-nationals to rip the oil, gas and mineral wealth from under our noses? We're an exploited island, while the Pope's Army wages a nationalistic war on Northern Protestants, the capitalists are silently profiteering. Our confused majority are further confused by the Northern situation and distracted from the state of affairs in the South. They, conditioned by a nationalistic Catholic education, English and American propaganda, regular diets of "Time Magazine" and "The Reader's Digest" on the miseries of the Cubans under Castro and weekly globules of religious tranquillisers from the pulpit, shy away and are afraid to examine socialism. In some ways it is not unlike the way Roman Catholics were brought up and taught to believe that Protestants were damned. In the fifties what Catholic would attend a Protestant funeral? Austin Clarke wrote one of his famous poems on de Valera and his Ministers skulking outside the cemetery wall at Douglas Hyde's burial.

In spite of all this conditioning, propaganda and indoctrination, Senator Russell, Paddy McGrath and all their camp followers at the Golden Spoon Saloon have reason to be on their guard: you can imprison and kill people, you can censor expression of thought but you cannot kill a philosophy. A political philosophy will live as long as people believe in it. And do what they may the godfathers of wealth and power cannot dam up the stream of Marxist thought finding expression in every country in the world; neither can they stop the march towards socialism. History has decreed that socialism is to succeed capitalism and history is like a great wheel rolling down a hill; it can be deflected, impeded, stopped temporarily but it will eventually roll down. Examine roughly and in brief outline European history: there was a feudal state, followed by a monarchical-aristocratic period, succeeded by the rise of the bourgeois state after the French Revolution, then an extension of the franchise seemingly giving every man a say in his destiny (a Labour government).

This broadly outlines the progression of power in England over the centuries. In it we see the great tactic of the power elite giving ground gradually, reforming and consolidating their position under the cover of reform. The greatest obstacle to socialism in England has been the British Labour Party which is just a harmless stalking horse used by the establishment to gull the majority into believing that they have power. Real power rests with the powerful industrialists, the landed aristocracy and last but not least in today's world the American captains of international capitalism, the lords of the multi-national corporations. In the final analysis a man has to decide whether he is a socialist or a capitalist and one does not mean a British or Irish Labour Party socialist.

You can shout and rant and rave but it is only when you seriously threaten to dislodge the powerful, take away their wealth and privilege, that they will show their fangs.

In England in 1381 the peasants, degraded and dehumanized by the ruling clique of aristocracy and the dissolute council of the boy king Richard II rebelled in arms led by Wat Tyler and John Ball. It was a rising sparked off by misery anger and hatred but without any definite goal or guiding philosophy. The peasants were mercilessly butchered. As they attacked and sacked the citadels of wealth and privilege, they chanted a rhyme:  
"When Adam delved and Eve span  
Who was then the gentleman?"

# KEMMY TO WIN

## A WORKERS' T.D.

For the first time in the history of Limerick politics a local socialist, backed by a politically conscious group, has openly presented himself as a candidate at the forthcoming general election. For the first time ever the Limerick people have an opportunity of electing a genuine working class candidate to represent them in the Dail. Unlike other left-wing groups who merely put forward candidates at election times in order to be seen to be doing something, or to "keep the old flag flying", this Organisation enters the election confident of winning one of the four seats in the constituency.

No other candidate in the election in Limerick has a record of involvement in working class political affairs to compare with Jim Kemmy. He has been the most active and prominent trade unionist in the city for the past two decades. Over twenty-five years a trade unionist, he has served as secretary of the Limerick Branch of the Brick and Stonelayers' Trade Union for the past seventeen years. He became president of the Limerick Council of Trade Unions in 1973, a position to which he was re-elected in the following year.

He is a former member of the Labour Party. During his membership of that party he spent three years as a member of the National Administrative Council and also acted as chairman of its worker democracy policy committee. He left the Labour Party in 1972 when he became convinced that it would not become socialist.

His efforts on behalf of his fellow-workers culminated in his election to the Limerick City Council, in June 1974, on the first count. His record-breaking 1,275 votes was the highest ever recorded by a candidate contesting the local government elections in Limerick for the first time.

Among the other offices held by Jim Kemmy are:  
 Secretary Limerick Building Trades Group.  
 Chairman Limerick Branch of the Workers' Association.  
 President Delegate Board of the Mechanics' Institute.  
 Chairman of the Limerick Branch of the Irish Labour History Society.  
 Chairman of the National Monuments Advisory Committee of the Limerick Corporation.  
 Vice-Chairman of the Limerick Family Planning Association.  
 Editor of the Limerick Socialist.  
 Member of the Limerick Multi-Channel Campaign Committee.  
 Executive member of the Limerick Council of Trade Unions.

The decision of the Limerick Socialist Organisation to nominate its chairman, Jim Kemmy to contest the general election is, therefore, an important step in the political development of the working class in Limerick. Despite the limitations on the powers of individual deputies and the undemocratic structure of national government, the election offers a unique opportunity for political advancement.

In the Dail Jim Kemmy will strive to use his position to defend and advance the democratic rights of the people. Backed by the LIMERICK SOCIALIST newspaper, he will be able to continue to expose and attack injustice and discrimination. With the support of the paper he will be able to operate as an outspoken, vigilant "watchdog" on all sections of government. With research and other assistance from his socialist colleagues outside the Dail and working in close consultation with tenants and workers, he will be able to bring an uncompromised voice to Irish public life.

Unlike the personal election "manifestos" presented by the candidates of the three main political parties, Jim Kemmy, as befitting a socialist candidate, has given a clear and comprehensive statement of his political position. No other candidate in Irish political history has called for following policies:

based on the right of the Northern Protestant people to opt for the state of their own choosing and the democratic rights of Catholics in the N.I. State.

- \* The complete separation of Church and State.
- \* Full family planning facilities as a basic human and civil right.
- \* The democratic control and management of schools and colleges.

As a member of the Limerick City Council Jim Kemmy has been an outspoken and fearless champion of the people's rights. He is the only member of the present council with a full attendance at ordinary Council meetings. He has been a consistent critic of the waste of public money by trips abroad and by costly dinners and receptions following "opening ceremonies". He has also repeatedly opposed the adjournment of Council meetings for frivolous reasons.

Jim Kemmy has also spoken out strongly on a variety of social problems such as unemployment, the housing shortage, income tax, women's rights, ground rents, family planning, multi-channel television, industrial development and many more issues. He was responsible for the setting up of the Limerick Family Planning Association and has played a leading part in the success of its Clinic.

Other candidates in Limerick have refused to state their policies on these vital and fundamental matters. These candidates are relying on their "personalities" and on the strength of their party machines to get elected. The representatives of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are straightforward upholders of capitalism and make no attempt to disguise their class position. The Labour Party, having abandoned the pretence of the "Seventies will be Socialist" policy, does not now claim to be a socialist party. However, many of its candidates still attempt to present themselves as the political representatives of the workers. The performance of Labour Party on the Limerick City Council and as a partner of Fine Gael in the Coalition Government has been weak and cowardly. The party's representative in Dail Eireann from the constituency has made Limerick a byword for intolerance and bigotry and, because of his buffonery, has made our city a laughing-stock throughout the country.

As a result of these antics wrongly our people have often been maligned for being a backward, conservative lot. Any objective observer, who has lived in and out of Limerick, will testify that this picture is a false one. In general our people are no different from people in other parts of this country. The conservative image of the city has been largely earned by loud-mouthed spokesmen, lay and clerical, who projected themselves and their ignorant ideals as being generally representative of the entire local community.

As the election date comes closer the maturity and common sense of the ordinary Limerick people is very much in evidence. It is obvious that a growing number of these people are demanding more enlightened and more committed public representatives. It is also obvious that they want a change away from the window-dressing and petty squabbling that passes for politics in Limerick and in the Dail.

The election campaign being organised on behalf of Jim Kemmy is being led by local socialists and trade union activists and will be one of the most determined, best-organised efforts ever seen in an election in Limerick. The election workers on the campaign team will not need market research consultants to interpret their finding on the canvass. The signs from the people are already definite and unmistakable: the opening of the ballot-boxes will not only open the way for the election of the first Limerick socialist deputy: it will also be a milestone in the political development of the Irish working class.

- \* The democratic settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict

# SOCIALISM AND THE FARMERS

One of the outstanding and continuing failures of socialism in this country has been its failure to make any inroad amongst the farming community. In T.A. Jackson's History of Ireland connections between the Fenians and the International Working Men's Association are mentioned but no one could honestly suggest that the Fenians were greatly influenced by anything except basic natyionalism. Again, Davitt and the Land Leaguers were a populist movement, with very worthy aims to free the tillers of the soil from wretched conditions and savage oppression. The Ribbonmen, Moonlighters and their urban and more famous counterparts. The Invincibles, would in today's world be called left-wing terrorist groups, anarchistic in their thinking and actions; they were in fact angry, violent men reacting against a system, which had degraded them, in the only way they understood — through violence. They had no theory, no philosophy: all was in the deed.

But it is not until the early thirties that self-avowed serious political groups and activists attempted to draw the farmers to socialism. Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore, David Fitzgerald and others travelled the country on behalf of Saor Eire or The Republican Congress in an attempt to win the small farmer to the cause; their success at its best was not remarkable.

There are some standard explanations for this: the small farmer is conservative, the Land Acts and subsequent legislation, in giving the small holder a few acres, ensured his implacable opposition to any form of socialism. Socialism is seen as a working man's, urban creed and not something for the country, the interests of which clash with those of the town. These are simple explanations but all too facile. What a lot of people will not face up to is that socialist doctrine was not made meaningful for the farmer.

Saor Eire with its confused left-wing slogans and ideas is an example. One prominent member, now an international figure, speaking to a group of farmers was told by one farmer as he stomped out of the hall: "I'm a good republican but by God no one is going to divide up my farm". Fair dues. Was he right or wrong? He was damn well right! Sean McBride was a rather naive activist telling a farming group of schemes for land division. In plain words no farmer is in favour of division, collectivism, nationalization or any other lefty claptrap which is against his immediate interests and insofar as he can see will not benefit him in the ultimate. Ask a worker to cut his wage to forward the cause of socialism!

If the farmer is asked to support something is it not reasonable as with everyone else, to give him a reason for doing so! As to conservatism, the farmers are as conservative as the Dubliners, no more but so. Where did a disgraced and disgraceful Fianna Fail government hold its own in the last general election? In Dublin, and where did it lose seats? Would you believe Mayo? The Dublin Left, the ragbag of Messiahs, megalomaniacs, self-seekers and dilettantes, has propagated the idea that Dublin is progressive, the country backward and Limerick, the most anti-progressive city in the country. This is worked out over revolutionary doses of brandy and soda and given the imprimatur of the appropriate guru. But then, who takes the Dublin Left seriously?

The business of buying off the small farmers with a few acres stands up; this is a tried and successful reformist tactic and is only one of many used by the conservative parties here to buy off or put a damper on militant small-farmer agitations. Any fostered division between town and country is fallacious and manufactured; there is now immediate communication between city and country; some farmers work partime in industry and there are few who haven't children and relations working in urban areas.

## DISCUSSION ARTICLE BY JOHN CASEY

So, where do we the Limerick Socialist Organisation stand with farmers. We are a pragmatic, socialist, organisation putting forward a candidate in the general election. We hardly expect the support of the ranchers, the Fine Gaelers, their wallets bursting with tenners, faces red with brandy, whom we see purring through the streets of Limerick. But what of the smaller farmer? We cannot answer for the smaller farmer. Is he working for a living? If so, he is a worker like the dustman, the teacher, the bank clerk, and the shop assistant in Roche's Stores. Let the small farmer work it out for himself. Does he belong with the IFA, ICMSA, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, for, let him make no mistake, these are the organisations of power and wealth and privilege?

The sacred cow of Fine Gael is a real Golden Vale cow. Is his living standard rising like the big farmer, remaining steady, or is it in jeopardy or in a state of erosion as is that of many workers? And I use the word worker in its broadest sense of a person working for a living. We are not selfish; we'll leave it to the Dublin Left to unearth revolutionary cobblers and bakers in the Liberties. Since joining the E.E.C. some farmers have become so rich that they literally don't know what to do with their money. With rising costs, more specialised and scientific farming, the small farmer finds the going rough and rocky. I asked a small farmer in West Galway some weeks ago which organisation he belonged to. With his head lowered he said the I.F.A. A casual glance at the farm was enough. He knew and I knew that he was with the wrong team. The farmers knew the score when they voted for E.E.C. membership; they had the Manshold Plan before them with its proposals to end unviable farming and pension off or re-employ the small farmers.

We understand the plight of the small farmer; he has not turned his back on socialism. Socialism has turned its back on him. At the 1974 Annual Conference of the Irish Labour Party, the party that at present claims represents the workers in Dail Eireann, there was not a single motion on agriculture or farming.

John Casey

P.S. Unlike many of the political papers, this is a democratic journal and the editor would welcome any letter, comment or article in reply to the above piece.

## HOW GREAT OUR CIVILISATION

BY

SEAN HEALY

Do you know what the fetid sweat smells like,  
clotted and stinking under the belt,  
has the salt of it ever stung your eyes,  
where pitprops are the only trees you see,  
and the ceiling of a two-foot seam of coal  
the limits of your only dust-choked skies;  
would you work on your knees for hours at a stretch  
where there's neither sun, nor breeze  
under the earth,  
and silicosis haunts the miner's breath;  
accursed be the fool, the hypocrite fool,  
who sneers when the miners strike,  
remember the fire when you warm your arse,  
and the food you eat that's cooked on gas,  
some fellow-human is forced by the fate of an inhuman system  
to fill your grate,  
while fools stand up and prate, and prate  
how great our civilisation is.

# POEMS

by  
Desmond O'Grady

## REQUIEM FOR PADDY O'REILLEY

I just read, in a Boston newspaper:  
Paddy O'Reilley, native of Limerick City  
Ireland, died Thanksgiving after an accident.  
His remains may be seen in Tamburro's Funeral  
Parlour, Watertown, Massachusetts. Tomorrow,  
a Requiem Mass in Gaelic will be celebrated  
by the Rev. Fr. Anthony Brophy at 9.30 a.m.  
in St. Michaels Parish Church.

The story begins on the shores of the Atlantic  
in the rain, the ruin, the bogs and stony fields.  
It continues with the cheapest steerage  
across the Atlantic and concludes with a widow,  
a small boy and a funeral in Watertown, Mass.

When all's said and done,  
anywhere's the same for dying:  
There, where wild heather perfumes  
the stones after rain; here,  
where pollution permeates everything.  
It's all the one — whether a body becomes a stone,  
industrial waste, snow or shamrocked fresh air.  
It's not the dying that's full of sorrow,  
here rather than there.

*Requiem Aeternam* Paddy O'Reilley  
among the coloured plastic flowers  
in Tamburro's Funeral Parlour.  
All the hovels of Ireland  
hold their huddled hour,  
hide their hearts.  
A second class funeral,  
fifty dollars. *Liberarme*  
*Domine de morte aeterna.*

The seacrow circles your western seaboard.  
*Dies irae.* What's soaked in sorrow  
never dies. *Dies illa;* here rather  
than there, without glory.

Your ancestors inspired their times with adventure.  
No wake for you in Tamburro's Funeral Parlour —  
you were waked elsewhere, with whiskey and weapons  
and the tragic colours of terror.

Paddy O'Reilley died for no visionary madness.  
His kind of Irishman dies anonymously  
far from Ireland where whiskey bottles spill blood.

Paddy O'Reilley. He's dead. *Liberarme Domine.*  
He came from green fields, the wide world his country.  
He founded no city, gave his name to no sea. He died  
alone, for a few dollars counted in dimes.  
*Requiem aeternam.* Those who can afford to die  
only on weekends — the week's work done — come to say  
their goodbyes: Irish, Polish, Italian, Spaniard.  
That's their history: Ireland, Poland, Italy, Spain . . .

Tamburro's Funeral Parlour, Watertown, Massachusetts —  
and a few lines in a Boston newspaper.

## IN MY GENERATION

In this place, in my generation,  
I have seen them willingly, with pleasure —  
not because commanded to — slaughter.  
I have seen them, sunk so low, believe

in a black faith, spastic from spent fury  
and live in a snarl of savage, compulsive fantasies.

In this place, in my generation, I have seen  
spying on your brother elevated to virtue when the hero  
was the murderer, the traitor, the thief —  
and the man who stayed silent, by pure chance,  
from lack of conviction, was loathed as a leper.

In this place, in my generation, I have seen  
whoever waxed in protest forced to hide  
and the country viciously sneer on the horror  
of her lot, drunk on the blood of her own farrow.

In this place, in my generation, I have seen  
mothers curse their children and abortion happy salvation.  
I have seen the living envy the rat-eaten dead  
asking *Is there a life before death?*  
and poison thicken like scum on kitchen tables.

In this place, in my generation, I have seen  
even the poet shut up, wait to speak again.  
Perhaps nobody's left worthy to curse  
but that terrifying sage of the terrible word, Isaiah.  
Desmond O'Grady (after Radnoti)

## FATHERS AND SONS

### FOR LEONARD

Driven here  
by the west wind —  
landbirds from starboard  
crossed our bow. In the hope  
of friendly days to come,  
we've settled.

Our place fronts the shore in this  
our sea dingle. The north wind  
curls whitecaps length of the breakwater.  
Bed, table, chair and the journey's  
history. I keep big blackbacked  
notebooks, look like chiselled  
flagstones, for logbooks.

Comes a day in age's privilege  
when father and son may talk —  
after the trial of absence,  
the pain suffered for lack,

Void of all baseness yourself,  
you watched over me a child.  
Now, for all my quarrelman manner,  
I watch over you in your hangdog age.

In your years' cloud of pain  
that grey head's filled with countless  
preoccupations. The smallest chore  
becomes some laboured project. We talk:  
You of our native fields, the simple  
daily events of our people; I  
of my world traveled and laboured.

Your grandson beside me grows daily.  
His mother's more formidable yearly.  
After much knocking about  
I'm a bit of a wreck  
and where's she'll mend me?

# GRAND MET'S GRANDEST HOUR

LONDON LETTER  
BY  
ARTHUR LA BERN

Sorry to be away so long and I hope you haven't missed me. No, I haven't been in an English nick where so many better men than myself have been accommodated. Just before Christmas I was evicted. It was Grand Metropolitan Hotel's grandest hour. Grand Met, I must explain, are the landlords of the flat I occupied and where I was in arrears of rent.

To get me out that vast organisation briefed counsel, called witnesses from their army of managers and accountants to testify that I did owe rent. Their presence was really not necessary because I admitted I owed it, but it made a morning out for them as a welcome change from the unspeakable dreariness of feeding figures into the computers of the Grand Metropolitan Empire.

Altogether, the operation really was a sledgehammer to crack a peanut. But at least they didn't send for the Royal Irish Constabulary with battering rams.

The judge had confirmed the eviction order but had suggested that the landlords might come to some reasonable arrangement before putting me on the street. I think he might have been on my side, if a judge can ever be on anybody's side, because when Grand Met's counsel asked for costs His Lordship said they could have no more than ten pounds. The glum expression with which the plummy-voiced young counsel received this 'award' afforded me not a little pleasure.

The 'reasonable arrangement' recommended by the judge was interpreted by Herbert Smith and Co., Grand Met's solicitors, with enough partners to form three Rugby teams, was to put the bums in at 8 o'clock on the morning of December 15th.

Actually, I beat the bailiffs by an hour, leaving at seven. I regret to say that snow was not falling. It would have been so much more dramatic. I played fair, resisting the temptation to hand the keys over to the local 'squatters'.

The flat from which I'd had the old heave-ho had previously been occupied by a very busy young whore who'd taken a larger flat in the same block because her business, as always in times of economic depression, was flourishing. I didn't need references to get in because she'd recommended me to the management.

Landlords will always take the word of a whore, as happily as they take her rent. Whores are reliable tenants, but I don't suppose Grand Met will ever be prosecuted for living wholly or in part on the proceeds of immoral earnings.

Vast concerns like Grand Metropolitan Hotels, with mind-boggling ramifications, take more in immoral earnings in a day than those Maltese brothers who controlled the vice game in London did in those bonanza War years. Incidentally, there are more whores on the pavement of Park Lane, London, W1, at nights now than ever. Why any aged Labour peer should have to drive round and round the Marble Arch for a bit of Wiggery-pokery baffled me.

And how can one be charged with insulting behaviour for propositioning a whore? Surely the insult is in not propositioning her?

Grand Metropolitan's immoral earnings are not so much from their prostitute tenants as from their pub outlets. Among the many properties Mr. Maxwell Joseph's unacceptable octopus has grabbed is Watney's, the brewers whose Red Barrel brew was so foul it sparked off the highly successful Campaign for Real Ale.

I once put my arm on the bar of a Watney pub and my elbow was drenched in the dregs of slopped beer. I had to take the suit to the cleaners, where I explained what had happened.

The manager of the cleaning establishment shook his head

sadly and said, 'If that's Red Barrel, sir, it will never come out'.

But I digress. On another occasion I went into one of Mr. Maxwell Joseph's Watney pubs, the Lord John Russell, just round the corner from the flat from which he booted me out with the help of his legal lackeys, Herbert Smith and Co., a sleazy private inquiry agent who'd failed to serve the writ and the plummy-voiced counsel, who only got a tenner costs.

I asked for a gin and tonic. The barman served the smallest gin I've ever seen and placed beside it a huge bottle of tonic.

I did not even complain about the smallness of the gin, but pointed out that I did not want a large tonic for a small gin which I do not think is an unreasonable request.

The barman replied, 'We only do the large size'.

In view of the fact that even a small tonic water costs 12d, the value of the contents being somewhat less than an old farthing, work out the profit on a large one for yourself. I'm no Einstein. It isn't even immoral earnings. It's immoral extortion.

The lesson is don't go into the Lord John Russell pub if you happen to be in the vicinity of Euston where it is situated. Better still, don't ever go into a Watney's pub — ever, anywhere.

The Lord John Russell is named after an English Prime Minister. He was a tiny man and he married a tall widow. Henceforth he was known as 'The Widow's mite'. Perhaps that was unkind, but not nearly as unkind as naming one of Mr. Maxwell Joseph's dreadful Watney pubs after him.

However, Mr. Maxwell Joseph is a public-spirited man. A year ago he was in hospital and he disliked the food so much that he is now canvassing for a contract for Grand Metropolitan Hotels to do all the catering for our National Health hospitals.

If Mr. Maxwell Joseph thinks hospital food is 'disgusting' (his word) he should try eating in one of his own boozers.

I referred just now to the 'Widow's mite', Lord John Russell. I wonder whether that more recent Prime Minister, the less likeable Sir Harold Wilson, the secretary's footstool, will be including Lord John in his forthcoming book on the other 37 British Prime Ministers, for which he is getting a reputed £300,000 for the television rights from that odious television tycoon, David Frost. Screaming Lord Sutch would be more up Harold's Street. How come he didn't get an honour?

That Chilblain Frost has also done a deal with Nixon. So Harold is in good company.

Personally, I am not in the least interested in Wilson's views on England's Prime Ministers — among whom he was among the least distinguished and the most hypocritical. I would be more interested in the 37 past Prime Ministers' views on Harold Wilson if they could come back, which God forbid.

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